

The late dreadful Earthquakes no Proof of God's  
particular Wrath against the *Portuguese* :

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# S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

## LITCHFIELD,

On *Sunday*, DECEMBER 7, 1755.

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By T. SEWARD,  
Canon of LITCHFIELD.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author was formerly entertained with great Hospitality by the Gentlemen of the *English* Factory at *Lisbon*, and passed some pleasing Weeks in viewing the Magnificence of the City, and the Beauties of the adjacent Country. The Sense therefore of its dreadful Calamity being enhanced by Gratitude and Friendship, he was induced very early to preach on this melancholy Subject, and before the *Order for a Fast* the Sermon was sent to the Press, designed chiefly as a Present to Friends, to whom alone a Writer can be serviceable, whose Name awakes not the Attention of the Public.

A Superstition is attacked, which is deep-rooted in the Heart of Man, and which very few even of our own Church, and much fewer, I believe, of any other, are wholly exempt from. It is hoped therefore, that the Publication may tend some little to confirm that *rational System* of Religion which excludes every Species of Superstition; a System which the Infidel and Enthusiast join their Efforts to dispossess us of, and to substitute in its stead a *Christianity not founded on Argument*.



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LUKE XIII. 4, 5.

*Those eighteen upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

SUCH were the benevolent Sentiments of our blessed Saviour on a Number of unfortunate Men, who were overwhelmed by the sudden Fall of a Tower in *Siloam*; such too was the charitable Sentence which he pronounced on some *Galileans*, whom *Pilate* had murdered in the Temple of God, and mingled their Blood with their Sacrifices.

Very different, and far less charitable, had been the Sentiments of his *Audience* on those Subjects; for tho' it is not expressly said, that the Persons who spake of these murdered *Galileans*, had supposed them guilty of some enormous Crimes, for which so heavy a Judgment had befallen them,

yet from our *Saviour's Speech*, who answered to their *Thoughts* as well as their *Words*, it is very clear, that such was the Sentence which had passed in their Hearts.

Nor were the best of Men, even his own *Disciples*, free from the Guilt of having formed such *hard Censures* upon the Misfortunes of their Fellow-Creatures; for when they saw a Man that had been born *blind*, they supposed it a *Judgment* for some grievous Sin that either *he* or his *Parents* had committed. *One* of these they thought the undoubted cause, and only asked their *Lord* which it was. But he in that Instance, as well as in his Answer to those *Jews* who told him of *Pilate's Cruelty*, strongly rebukes their Cenforiousness, and probably corrected a Fault which they had been subject to from their Infancy.

But this excellent Advice against aggravating the *extraordinary Distresses* of our unfortunate Brethren, by supposing them the immediate Consequence of some *extraordinary Guilt*; whatever Weight it had on the *Apostles of Christ*, is far from having its due Influence with the generality of Christians. Every *Sect of Religion*, every *Party in Politics*, every *Nation contending* with others, all are apt to triumph in the *Distresses* of their *Rivals*, to look on their *Misfortunes* as certain *Signs of God's Wrath* against them, and to *thank God*, not as they ought to



to do, that he has not afflicted themselves with those *Judgments* which they may have *more deserved*; but with the *self-applauding Pharisee*, they thank him, or rather boast themselves, that they are not such *impious Wretches* as to be the *Objects* of such *Vengeance*. The *Disasters* of their *Adversaries* appear Proofs of *God's* detesting their *Principles* and *Party*, and approving their own; tho' they generally are each so partial to themselves, that when the like or worse *Disasters* fall on their *own Heads*, they are not ready to condemn, for that Reason, either their own *Principles* or *Practices*, or to think that *Heaven* has declared in Favour of their Enemies.

Numberless are the Instances of this Conduct, both in old Times and in latter Days: I shall just mention a *remarkable one* in our own Nation. In the *Civil Wars* of the last *Century*, how did each *Party* brandish the *Judgments of God* against each other? How did the *conquering Side* triumph for a while in full Assurance of their *Success* being an evident *Token* of *God's* espousing their Cause, and of their being the *Elect*, the sole *Favourites* of Heaven? How did they insult the *King* and his *Friends*, as *bated of God*, and placed on high, as *Marks* of his *Indignation* against *Tyranny* and *Oppression*? and no sooner was the *Scene reversed*, the *Victors vanquished* by their own *Dissensions*,  
and

and many of the *Regicides* condemn'd to the like ignominious Deaths that they had brought on the *King*; than the *Conquerors* were as ready in pointing out the *Judgments of God* upon their *Enemies*, and were as confident that their own *Success* was a *Proof* of his approving their *Cause* and *Principles* as the others had been before.\*

While

\* Among the Instances of Persons boasting of *Judgments* against their *Enemies*, I shall select one, which being a *local* one to the People of *Litchfield*, will be to them particularly interesting. In the Civil Wars, Lord *Brook* was irreconcilably averse to the Government in Church and State; altho', says Lord *Clarendon*, in his own Nature, he was a very *civil well-humoured Man*. That he was *honest* appears from his refusing at *York*, when in the *King's* Power, the *Oath of Protestation* against the *Scots* in 1639, which all the *Scots* and all the *English* Lords, except Lord *Say* and *Him*, swallowed without Scruple, tho' the Actions of many of them were quite inconsistent with such an *Oath*. After the Battle of *Edge-Hill*, Lord *Brook* was sent by the *Parliament* to harangue the Citizens of *London*, where, greatly magnifying the Advantage gained by their Party, and strongly tinctured with the *Fanaticism* of the *Age*, he told them, that there were near *two Thousand* of the opposite Side, and only *One Hundred* " of theirs, slain; " This, says he, is a very *miraculous thing*. He that " dealt so wonderfully heretofore, it were to distrust him, if we did " not think he would do so again; truly we are a *dear People exceed-* " *ingly beloved of God*."

Here we see him confident, that a *Success*, which was of very doubtful Authority, for both Sides claimed the Victory, was a full Proof of God's *Love* to them, and *Hate* to their *Enemies*. In the beginning of the Year 1643, he came to besiege the *Cloze* of the *Cathedral* at *Litchfield*, which being then esteemed a very strong Fortrefs, was defended by the Earl of *Chesterfield*, and a great number of the *King's* Friends. Before he opened the Siege, he made a long Prayer, as was his Custom, before the Army, and is said to have begged " that



While both *Parties* were thus in their turns boasting of *Judgments* which had fallen on their *Foes*, the  
*Papists*,

“ that God would by some *special Token* manifest to them his *Appro-*  
*bation* of that their Design; that if the *Cause* was not *just* and *right*,  
 “ he might presently be cut off” — Extempore Effusions are often  
 ill-remembered. The former Part of the Prayer seems highly prob-  
 able and exactly of a piece with his Speech in *Guildhall*; the latter  
 expressing a *Doubt* of the *Goodness* of his *Cause* seems quite out of Cha-  
 racter, and was probably an Addition to his Prayer. — He planted  
 his Battery against the *South-East Gate* of the *Cloze*, standing himself  
 in a Window to direct the *Gunners*, but a sudden Shout of the Sol-  
 diers causing him to come to the Door; One, *Diot*, a *Clergyman's*  
*Son*, who was *deaf* and *dumb*, being placed on the Battlements of  
 the *Lady-Choir*, levelled at him and shot him, tho' armed Cap-a-pie,  
 thro' the Eye into the Brain; the Aim was not exact, for the Ball first  
 glanced on a Piece of Timber. The Spot whereon he fell, in *Dam-*  
*Street*, is still distinguished, by being left *unpaved*. — On this me-  
 morable Accident, it is no wonder, that the opposite Party should  
 retort a *Judgment* upon him; and *Arch-Bishop Laud*, in his History,  
 observes three Things: “ *First*, That this great and known Ene-  
 “ my of *Cathedral Churches* died thus fearfully in the Assault of a *Ca-*  
 “ *thedral*. 2d, That this happened on *St. Chad's Day*, of which Saint  
 “ the *Cathedral* bears the Name. 3d, This Lord being two Years  
 “ before upon the *Thames*, upon some Discourse about *St. Paul's*  
 “ *Church*, then in their Eye, he told some young Lords, *he hoped to*  
 “ *live to see that one Stone of that Building should not be left upon another* :  
 “ But that *Church* stands yet, and that *Eye* is put out that hoped to  
 “ see the Ruins of it.” —

Thus does a *Protestant Bishop* call in the Countenance of a *Popish*  
*Saint*, to turn the common Fate of War into a miraculous *Judgment*. But  
 if a *Miracle* was wrought in defence of the *Cathedral*, how came Sir  
*John Gell*, who was next in Command after Lord *Brook*, to take and  
 almost demolish it, and his Posterity to continue to this Day in quiet  
 Possession of a large Estate belonging to it? — How unfit was Bi-  
 shop *Laud*, then in *Prison*, and shortly to be *beheaded*, to call suffering  
 in any Cause a *Proof* of God's *Displeasure*? How did the Enemy re-  
 tort as a *Judgment* against him, that *Prin*, who was condemned in  
 the

*Papists*, who saw the dreadful Calamities that each had brought on the other, triumphed in their turn, and

the *Star Chamber* to the *Pillory*, *Loss of Ears*, and *perpetual Imprisonment* without Colour of Law, [See the *Trial* at large, not that dishonest Abridgment of it by *Salmon*] only for writing against *Stage-Plays*, which happened to exasperate the *Queen*, as she had *Plays* acted in her Parlour, according to the *French Custom*, most *Sunday-Evenings*, and once had with her Courtiers acted in a Play herself; that this Man so ill used by the *Bishop* should at last become the *Parliamentary Manager* against him; and that the latter, who had been an Instrument of condemning the former *without Law*, should at last himself *perish without Law*? for he was hunted down by a Cry of Wretches in a Manner more *illegal* and more *pityable* than Lord *Strafford*, and which was only exceeded by the miserable Fate of the *King* himself. In the dreadful Conflicts of that Age, Distresses were allotted to the best of Men on both Sides, and whoever makes them a *Proof of Guilt* will set up a very bad *Criterion* of Vice and Virtue.

A *Cynic Wit* and *Orator* of the succeeding Age, has a whole Sermon full of *Judgments* against those that were *against* him and his Party; who, speaking of *Lord Brook's* Death, after enumerating most of the above-mentioned Circumstances, concludes—"He asked  
" of God a Sign, and God gave him one; signing him on the Fore-  
" head with such a Mark as he is like to be known by to all Po-  
" sterity."

*Bishop Tillotson* has a Sermon on the Subject of *Judgments*, which seems levelled against this of *Dr. South*, his Text the same that I have chosen; where he very justly observes—"That *all Sorts of Men*  
" are very *superstitiously affected* this way; all *Parties* are very greedy  
" to catch at any Shadow of a *Parallel* between the *Judgments* that  
" beset their Enemies and the Sins which they suppose them guilty  
" of. *Fancy* is an endless thing; and if we go this way to work, then  
" he that hath the best Wit, is like to be the best Interpreter of  
" *God's Judgments*."—He, on this Subject, quotes a *wise Observation* of *Thuanus*, *Turbatis odio aut amore animis, ut fit in Religionis Dis-*  
*sentionibus, pro se quisque omnia superstitiose interpretatur.* *Men's Minds*  
*being actuated by Love or Hatred, as it happens in Religious Contentions,*  
each



and thought the whole *Civil War* a *Judgment* on both, for having separated themselves from what they call their *Catholic Church*.

Thus did all *Sides* brand their *Adversaries* as the *Outcasts* of God, none of them foreseeing that these dreadful *Conflicts* between *Indefeasible Prerogative*, and *unbounded Licentiousness*, between too potent an *Hierarchy*, an *All-levelling Independency*, and the restless Attempts of *Popery* for a *Re-establishment*, would be in the End productive of the *just and happy Medium* between all those *Extremes*, our present excellent *Constitution* in *Church* and *State*. For this we have the highest Reason to be thankful to God by a due Sense of our own *Demerits*, and the *Greatness* of the *Blessing*.

But as Men are still prone to censure the *Faults* of others rather than their own; I shall briefly point out the great *Presumption*, and the great *Uncharitableness* of thus interpreting any remarkable *Calamity* of our Fellow-Creatures, to be a *Mark* of God's *particular* Indignation against them.

That it is great *Presumption* thus to pretend to know the *secret Counsels* of God, to fathom the Depths of

*each superstitiously interprets the Circumstances of every Event in his own Favour.*—To this I will only add.—Let every Man who is inclined to construe *Calamities* into *Judgments*, ask himself this Question—Was I ever willing to acknowledge any Misfortune that fell on one of my own Principles to be a Proof of God's *disapproving them*? or did I ever hear of any Man who would allow it.

*Infinite Wisdom*, and to interpret the meaning of his *Judgments*, which are *far above out of our Sight*, we have abundant Proofs from *Scripture*. The whole Book of *Job* seems written on purpose to root it out from the Minds of Men; for what Calamities ever fell so thick on the Head of one Man as on his? His *Flocks*, his *Herd*s, his numerous *Servants*, his beloved *Sons* and *Daughters*, tho' dispersed in different Places, all at one time destroyed by *signal Calamities*, and the dreadful *Tidings* poured into his Ears from every Quarter. Lastly, himself smitten with the most painful and loathsome *Disease*; his *Blood* turned into a *Mass* of *Corruption*; his *Skin* into one universal *Sore*. Not only his *Enemies*, but his best *Friends* thought him *accursed* of *God* for some *monstrous Sins* that he had concealed from the Eyes of Men: notwithstanding which, we are well assured, that he was the *wisest*, the *best*, the *most virtuous*, the *most beloved* of *God*, of all the Men then in the World.

Is not this enough to stop the Mouth of *Presumption* with regard to *Judgments*, and for ever to silence the Tongue of *Censure*? Alas! we find it did not do it; the *Jews* in our *Saviour's* time were as forward to misinterpret the *Judgments* of *God* against the Persons on whom they had fallen, as if the *Book* of *Job* had not been written, nor ever read in their *Synagogues*.

Our *Saviour*, who *alone* knew the secret *Counsels* of *God*, more than once rebukes them for this *Presumption*;



*sumption*; and there is something remarkably striking in the *Words* of my *Text*, now the *Event* has explained the full *Meaning* of them. *Think ye, that those eighteen upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell and slew them, were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but unless Ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Which we may thus paraphrase. “ Men of *Jerusalem*, ye are apt to believe that the *Fall of the Tower* “ in *Siloam* was a signal *Judgment* for some very un- “ common *Sins* of those who were crushed by it; “ whereas, their *Sudden Deaths* by this *Accident*, “ was no more a *Proof* of their *superior Guilt*, “ than a *Fever* or *Apoplexy*, or any of the common “ *Distempers* which destroy the *Life of Man*. They “ of them who were *good*, were cut off in *Mercy*, “ and will be far happier in another *World*. They “ who were *wicked* were cut off in *Mercy* too, and “ better had it been for *many of You* who now live “ in *Ease* and *Plenty*, that *you* had been one of their “ *Number*; for *you* will be guilty of a much “ *greater Wickedness* than any of them ever com- “ mitted; *you* will slay the *just one of God*; *you* will “ murder your *own Messiah*, the *Redeemer* and “ *Saviour* of the *World*; *you* will bring his *sacred* “ *Blood* upon *yourselves* and your *Children*; for “ which, such an amazing *Series* of terrible *Judg-* “ *ments* shall fall on *you*, and them; such a com- “ *plicated Destruction* of your *City* and *Temple*, “ that

“ that you will with not only *Towers*, but *Hills*  
 “ and *Mountains* to fall on you, if they could  
 “ cover you from *God's never-ending Wrath*, and  
 “ *everlasting Vengeance*.”---Such was the dreadful  
*Rebuke* which was couched in our Saviour's Words,  
*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*.

But we *Christians* have now a stronger Argument to prove that the most dreadful *Afflictions* of this *World*, are no Proof of *God's Anger* than ev'n the *Example of Job*, or the *Advice* of our *Saviour*. It is, that he himself was a *Man of Sorrows* and *acquainted with Grief*, that he appeared to his *Enemies* *deserted* and *smitten* of *God*; and that he was raised on the *Cross* a *Spectacle* of *Misery* to *Heaven* and *Earth*. Hence a *Christ crucified* was a *Stumbling-Block* to the *Jews*, and to the *Greeks*, *Foolishness*; and we shall ill have learned *Christ* ourselves, if after this, we interpret the *Misfortunes* of any to be *Proofs* of their *Guilt* or of our own *comparative Virtues*. If others *Sufferings* are greater than ours, shall we dare to tax them with greater *Wickedness*, when the only *Sinless*, the only *Perfect Man* that ever lived, suffered the most painful, the most afflictive, and the most ignominious *Death*?

One *Vice* often gives Birth to others, and this *Presumption* usually begets great *Uncharitableness*. It takes off that *Pity* which is due to *Distress*, and  
 so



so defeats one great End of God's *afflicting* some, and  *blessing*  others. For all the good things we enjoy, we are *Debtors* to God, and cannot repay him but by communicating a Part to those who are destitute of them. But if we shoot out our *Arrows*, ev'n *bitter Words*, if we wound them with *Censure* who are before wounded with *Sorrow*, we act the Part not of *Christians*, nay not of *Men*, but of *Devils*, whose Delight is to be the *Accusers* and *Tormentors* of their Brethren.

But perhaps you will say, are there not many Instances in *Scripture* of God's pouring out his Vengeance upon *Cities* and *Nations* for the *Wickedness* of those who dwell therein? and when we see the like *Judgments* in our Days, should we not ascribe them to the same Causes?---I answer, No.---Whatever are the Causes, they are not *revealed* to us as they were to the *Prophets* of the *Old* and *New Testament*. And without an *express Revelation*, we have no Right to assign the *End* and *Purpose* of God's *Providence* when his Arm is lifted up either to *defend* or *destroy* a Nation.

We do not deny but that God may still exert *supernatural Powers*, or he may from the *Beginning of Time* have ordained that the *Course of natural Events* may so coincide with the *moral Actions* of particular *Cities* or *Nations*, that *Storms* or *Earthquakes*, *Famines* or *Plagues* may fulfil some great

great *Purpose* of the *Creator*; so that his *general Providence* may in such *Instances* have all the *Effects* of a *supernatural* and *particular* one. But supposing either of these, and that we knew that some uncommon and extensive *Calamities* arose either from the *Intervention* of *supernatural Powers*, or from the common *Rotation* of *natural Causes* preordained by the *Creator* for a *particular purpose* of his *moral Government*; yet ought we not from thence to conclude any thing of the *comparative Wickedness* of the *Sufferers*, but charitably to hope that he *chasteneth* because he *loveth*, and *scourgeth* whom he *receiveth*.

But *Christians* have *Reason*, I think, to believe that *Storms* and *Earthquakes*, *Famine* and *Pestilence* are among the *general Judgments* of *God* against *Sin*; that they came with *Sin* into the *World* among other *Executioners* of the *Sentence* of *Death* upon *all Mankind*; and that *one Event* for the most *Part* happeneth to the *Righteous* and to the *Wicked*.

The *Case* of the *Jews* was widely different, they were under an immediate and *particular Providence*. *Temporary Rewards* and *temporary Curses* were the *Sanctions* of their *Law*; and hence we may account for the *Opinion* of the *Jews* in our *Saviour's* *Time*, that *Ruin* only overwhelmed the *Ungodly*; notwithstanding the *Case* of *Job*, who was not  
under



under the *Mosaic Dispensation*. That Dispensation ceased on the Destruction of the Temple, and the *Sanctions* of the *Christian Law* are the *Rewards* and *Punishments* not of this but of a *future State*.

We are therefore to look on this World as suited to the general State of Mankind, all under the Condemnation of *Death*. God has annexed to most *Crimes* natural *Judgments*; *Pains*, *Diseases*, and premature *Old-Age* are the *Penalties* inflicted on *Lust* and *Debauchery*, *Gluttony* and *Drunkenness*; *Hatred* and *Envy* are *Self-Tormentors*; *Anger* and *Fury* ferment in our Souls, and shake them like *Earthquakes*; and every *boisterous*, every *malignant Passion* is like a *troubled Sea* whose *Waters* cast up *Mire and Dirt*. These are the *Storms* against which we ought to exert all our Powers, these we may subdue, for against these we are sure that *constant and fervent Prayer* will avail much. If we subdue these, the *Storms* without cannot really hurt us; they may bring *temporal Death*, but *Death* will then be the *Gate of Heaven*.

It is indeed our Duty to pray against *temporal* as well as *spiritual Evils*, but with far less Fervency, and in absolute Subserviency to the latter. Whether our *Prayers* will ever avert an *impending Ruin*, and change the settled *Laws of Nature*, is quite uncertain: But they will do more; if they bring forth

forth no Fruit *here*, they will repay an *hundred-fold hereafter*.---In this Hope let us rest; *Death* is the Lot of all; there is not so much Difference in the *Manner* of it as we are apt to imagine: What are construed *Judgments*, because uncommon, are often not more agonizing than the commonest and most natural Deaths; the *accumulating Pains* of one dying in a raging *Fever* are perhaps equal to the more *acute* but shorter Agonies of one that is *burnt in his House*; the racking Tortures of the *Gout* and *Stone* have been as exquisite as *Bruises* of the *Flesh*, and *Fractures of Bones*, by the Fall of Roofs and Battlements.

Consider therefore the *Poison* of *Herbs* and *Minerals*, the *Stings* of *Scorpions* and *Serpents*, the *Ravages* of *Famine*, *War*, and the dreadful *Devastations* of *Hurricanes* and *Earthquakes*, as much the *general Judgments* of God against Sin, as the *radical Diseases* that lurk in all our Bodies.----Without an exprefs *Revelation* we have no Right to *particularise* them.

The *natural Man*, from a View of these various *Enemies of Life*, concludes only, *Let us eat and drink, for To-morrow we die*. Nay, the most *learned* of the *Heathens* drew no other Consequence from them, than that a *wise Man* should not *fear Death*, because *Fear* could not prevent it; or, be-  
cause



cause *Death* was an utter *Extinction* of *Being* \*. But the *Christian* is much better instructed; he is taught to *watch* and *pray*, because he knows in general how frail his *Life* is, but knows not the *Hour* of his *Summons*. This *Uncertainty*, so idly talked of by the *Heathen Philosophers*, is urged by our *Lord*, as the strongest Motive to *habitual Piety*, being inseparably connected with the *Sentence* at the *Day of Judgment*.

*Imminent Dangers*, to each *Individual*, should quicken his *Vigilance* of *Prayer*; great and *national Dangers* should awaken *national Devotions*.

The *Wisdom of the World* calls this the *Reasoning of superstitious Terror*; the *pretended Philosopher* says, he can set forth the *Causes* of these destructive Operations of *Nature*. He talks, perhaps, of *nitrous, sulphureous* and *mineral Particles*, fomenting in the *Air*, and bursting into *Lightening* and *Thunder*, and when confined and *exploded* within the Bowels of the *Earth*, shaking and rending whole *Kingdoms* by the Violence of their *Expansion*.---But how soon does this boasted *Knowledge* end in *Darkness* and *Ignorance*? Thou talk'st of *Causes*, when thou know'st only *Effects*. From *similar Experiments*,

\* See the real Sentiments of the *Philosophers of Greece and Rome*, with regard to *Death* and a *future State*, very evidently set forth, by *Dr. Warburton*, in the *Divine Legation of MOSES*.

Men of Learning have *told thee* what are probably the *constituent Particles* which give Birth to the *Thunder*. But wouldst thou think *Vegetation* sufficiently accounted for, by saying, that *Plants* are nourished by *Earth* and *Water* in *Asia*, just as they are in *Europe*? Little more dost thou say, in telling us, that Compounds similar to those which the *Chymist* moulds into *Gunpowder*, form *Lightening* and *Earthquakes*: For whence or how do these *subtle Particles* possess this amazing *Elasticity*? ----Here thou art *Ignorance itself*.----And if thou drawest no *Moral Reflections* from hence, if thou concludest, that these, because *natural*, are therefore not the *Voice of God* calling Men to *Repentance*; whatever thou knowest of the *Cause*, thou knowest nothing of the *Effect* which the *God of Nature* intended.----In this respect, thou art *worse than Ignorance*.

True Wisdom consisteth not in finding out a few *Links* in the *Chain of Causes*, but in discovering the *moral Good* that all the *Dispensations of Providence*, all the *Operations* and *Phænomena* of *Nature* ought to produce; that the *Blessings* of healthful *Suns* and fruitful *Seasons* should be *Matter of Praise* and *Thanksgiving*; that all her *pernicious Qualities*, all her *Ministers of Destruction* should rouse us from our *Lethargy of Sin*.

I . . . . . All



All the *natural System* acts in subserviency to the *moral* one.

This is the *Philosophy of Christ*. *Philosophy* that will make its *Disciples* wise indeed, *even wise unto Salvation*.

When *God's natural Judgments* therefore are *remarkably visible* in the Earth, *Woe* be to that *Nation*, who does not learn *Righteousness*. *Woe* be to those who are not candid in *Sentiment*, and compassionate in *Word* and *Deed* to the *Afflicted* and *Miserable*; who exaggerate the comparative *Guilt* of the *Sufferers*, and turn not their *Eyes* upon their own *Sins*, which may have much more deserved the *Chastisement* of an offended *God*.

Let us, my *Brethren*, when we hear of *thousands and ten thousands* overwhelmed in sudden *Destruction*, reflect how happy were the *Good* and *Virtuous* among them, whom the *Lord*, at his *unlooked-for Visitation*, found watchful and ready at his *Call*. And how necessary it is to be constantly prepared, lest we receive the like *unexpected Summons*. Let us therefore, by constant and fervent *Prayer*, endeavour to gain a confirmed *Habit* of *Piety* and *Virtue*; let us be in perfect *Charity* with all *Men*, and particularly so with the *Afflicted* and *Miserable*.----Then need we not fear, *tho' the Hills be moved, and Mountains carried into the Midst of the Sea, tho' the Waters thereof rage and swell, and*

*Earth open wide her Mouth to swallow us up quick.*

I doubt not but thro' this Discourse, you have had in your thoughts the *dreadful Calamity* of a *neighbouring Nation*; where a *City*, which a few Weeks ago was the *Pride*, the *Glory*, the *Treasury* of *Europe*, is now a *Heap of Ruin*. She that was raised like *Rome of Old* upon a *Circle of beautiful Hills*, and spread abroad upon the *Banks of one of the noblest Harbours in the World*; She that was *great among the Nations*, and a *Princess among the Provinces*, is now become *solitary and desolate*. She that sat as the *Empress of the Ocean*, and daily received the *Riches of both Indies* into her Lap, is now stript of her *beautiful Garments*, and lies weeping in *Dust and Ashes*. "I saw, says one of  
 " the unhappy *Sufferers*, that great and superb *City*  
 " overthrown by *Shocks*, which heaved up the  
 " most ponderous *Edifices*, and shook them just  
 " as *Reeds* are shaken by the *Wind*."

O how vain and unstable are all things under the *Sun*! how absurd for poor *Mortals* to boast themselves in the *Multitude* of their *Riches*, the *Magnificence* of their *Mansions*, or even the wide *Extent* of their *Dominions*!—Behold a *City* who had long enjoyed *Peace within her Walls* and *Plenteousness within her Palaces*, can now afford neither *Shelter* against the *Storm*, nor *Covering* against the *Winter's*



*ter's Cold.* All her People mourn ; her *Merchants* who had the Wealth of *Nobles*, her *Nobles* who many of them had been *Princes* in *Foreign Lands*, wandering to and fro and not knowing *where to lay their Heads*. Nay, her King himself, the *wealthiest Monarch* in *Europe*, and perhaps in the World, calling out for *Bread to relieve his Soul*.

And is it nothing to us that live in Ease and Prosperity? Can we hear of the miserable Condition of our *Allies* and *Friends* without Pity and Compassion? without a fervent Desire to contribute to their Relief, and to send them, when opportunity offers, proper Testimonies of our Benevolence?

Let us on this melancholy occasion be sure to avoid those presumptuous, those uncharitable *Censures* of calling the *Portuguese* greater Sinners than other Nations of *Europe*, but let us suppose our *Saviour* speaking to us in the Words of my Text, *I tell you nay, but unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish*, if not by a sudden Destruction in this World, by a much more dreadful One in the next.

It is necessary that we should be warned against this, as the *Spirit* of *Censure* is already gone forth, and some are apt to ascribe this signal Destruction either to the *Cruelty* of their *Inquisition*; to the *bigotted Idolatry* of the People; or, to the frequent *Murders* committed in their Streets. While the

*Roman Catholicks* will be full as ready to ascribe it to their *Commerce* with the *Protestants*, and their suffering so many, whom they call *Heretics*, to sojourn amongst them.

But let us turn our Eyes upon the Sins of our own People, and instead of dwelling at this time on the *superstitious Bigotry* of the unhappy *Portuguese*, let us reflect upon the *Libertinism* and *Infidelity* that are publicly boasted of by Numbers in this Nation, on the horrid *Imprecations* and *blasphemous Oaths* that are daily sounding in our Ears; and on the little *Sense* of *Religion* that appears in almost all Ranks and Degrees of Men amongst us. Let all of us therefore that have the least Sense of it left, first humble ourselves before the Almighty, and by our repentant Prayers endeavour to deprecate his Vengeance.

Let us next seize this Opportunity of shewing to all the World the *charitable* the *benign Temper* of the *Church of England*, by forgetting all Distinction between *Protestants* and *Papists*, and only considering the *Portuguese* as our *Neighbours* and *Brethren* labouring under the most afflictive Distresses that have for many Ages fallen on any People. Our compassionate and benevolent *King* has set us a worthy Example, and called on his *Parliament* for their generous Assistance, and if he should think fit to apply to all his People for  
their



their private Charity, let us liberally bestow a Share of the good Things we enjoy on those who of late possessed them in as great or much greater Abundance than ourselves, but are now reduced to the lowest Wretchedness.

Let us next reflect that if *God* at any time now acts by a *particular intervening Providence*, it is most probably in the Protection of *religious States and Kingdoms*, because the Prosperity or Down-fall of these is part of that great *prophetic System*, the *Outlines* of which are sketched out by *Isaiab, Daniel*, and others in the *Old Testament*, and are more clearly marked by *St. Paul, St. Peter*, and particularly by that *prophetic Evangelist St. John*.

Such a *National Charity* therefore is the most likely Means to *cover the Multitude of our National Sins*; to be a *Shield* against the *Sword* of our *Enemies* which is now ready to be drawn forth against us, to defend us either from a *sudden* or a *lingring Destruction*, and to preserve our BELOVED CONSTITUTION in *Church and State* to us and our Posterity for ever.

F I N I S.





